7:Bregy & Obolensky H-4, 5 (no date) 1940 RD1 Ukraine RD1

Russian literatures. It is in this spirit that Kotliarevsky published his comic poem, the *Travesty of Aeneid*, in 1798, the first great Ukrainian literary work, followed by a light comedy, *Natalka Poltavka*, which had a great success in Russia during a century and which is played to-day in all the countries of the Ukrainian language. Under the influence of German romanticism a particular interest arose in the Russian literary world for all that which was connected with the folk-lore, the language, and the customs of the people, as well as for their traditions and their art. Thus the first efforts of Kotliarevsky were well received by the literary circles of St. Petersburg and his *Travesty of Aeneid* remained one of the favourite readings of several Russian generations.

Encouraged by the great Slavophile movement which broke with all exaggerated Westernization, Russian writers turned to all the manifestations of the popular genius and, quite naturally, also to that of the Ukraine.

Just as in the eighteenth century the religious language and culture of Southern Russia had brought about the literary awakening of Moscow, in allowing the Russian language to free itself from its archaic forms, so, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Ukraine, her romantic past, the charm of her nature, and of her popular life, inspired Russian literature and poetry. The same period saw the birth of two Ukrainian geniuses who for ever occupy places of a high order in universal literature : Gogol (1809–52) and Chevtchenko (1814–61). Nicholas Gogol wrote only in Russian, not because he was forced to do so by some exterior factors, or because he ignored Ukrainian, but because the greatness and the diversity of his talent passed beyond the possibilities of expression of the literary Ukrainian language. Despite the picturesqueness and the indisputable richness of its forms, this language never went beyond the literary

7:Bregy & Obolensky H-4, 5 (no date) 1940 RD1 Ukraine RD1

538 192 form of popular idiom. Thus, in the domain of literary, scientific, philosophic, and technical vocabulary, it is incomparably less developed than the Russian language. The pictures of town life, of the life of the upper layers of society, which dominated, during the whole of the nineteenth century, as the subject of imaginative writings and particularly of the novel, are not easily expressed in the Ukrainian language. Some expressions and words, necessary for this, are missing. We even take the liberty of expressing the opinion, which may seem bold, that the reading of *Crime and Punishment*, of *War and Peace*, of *Oblomov*, or of *Dead Souls* in Russian would be of greater value to a Ukrainian than the translation of these works into his mother-tongue. Moreover, the translations of these immortal works into other great European languages seem to us to be closer to the form, the contents, and the ideas expressed by them than their translations into the Ukrainian language, which so much resembles Russian. Therefore every work of Gogol belongs, without any doubt, to the Russian literature without being, for this reason, foreign
538 to the Ukrainian world. A traditionalist, profoundly pious, to a point of being irritated by the Russian 'Intelligentsia,' already imbued with positivist ideas, he loved the whole Russia with an ardent and passionate love. He was hurt by the spectacle of desertions and cowardice which characterized the Russian life of his time, of all those open wounds which he was able to distinguish and to depict with an unrivalled sarcasm. Like the Slavophiles and later Dostoievski, he hoped that the salvation would come from the deeper forces dormant in the Orthodox Church and in the Russian Monarchy. The Ukrainian chauvinists of our day sometimes describe him as a renegade, an opinion which it is unnecessary to contradict. One only has to re-read